

**Time-coded notes for Interview with Narsay Serges**  
**March 1, 1984**

Mr. Serges's description is of his experience as a US GI who participated in the liberation of Buchenwald. His is an observer's account including no experiences of daily camp life, but the description gives a poignant picture of the appearance of the freed prisoners and the conditions of the camp after it was abandoned by the Nazis.

Tape counter

428 I was in the First US Army landing at Normandy six days after D-day. We stayed there for forty-five days, fought at the Battle of the Bulge. Around 12 April 1945 we moved in on the Buchenwald camp. At the time we didn't know it was a camp we were approaching.

845 I was appalled and amazed that one human can do such things to another.

945 We saw the survivors. I have a photo I took of seven or eight of them together. On the back I wrote, "These are the survivors. They actually look worse than the dead." We called them the living dead.

1130 I don't remember seeing women or children. We didn't have direct contact with the survivors beyond the first sight we'd had of them. I held guard duty at the camp for ten days.

1282 We (the US troops) had enough to eat. Some of us didn't finish their meals and dumped the leftovers into the "GI camp--a thirty gallon garbage can. Some of the former prisoners would come and eat the leftovers. They were being fed a restricted diet because their stomachs had shrunk through the long period in the camp.

1400 April was not as cold, but the former prisoners had only their prison-stripe outfits. They had probably one through all seasons like that.

1438 They moved slowly, listlessly, were weak.

1520 There was a huge pile of bodies -- the size of this room -- that the SS hadn't had time to cremate. They had heard the Americans were coming and hurried to get out.

1600 The scene made General Patton turn away in horror.

1630 Residents of nearby Weimar were ordered to come and bury the corpses. They showed little emotion. One thing I often heard was, "Ich nicht Nazi," but you wonder where were all the Nazis?!

1830 There were Jews, Poles, Russians, clergymen among the former inmates. They enacted a paper-maché memorial with the number 51,000 -- what they thought was the

number of victims.

1900 My job was, ironically, to keep the Americans away from the camp. Word had spread that Buchenwald was something unbelievable and thousands of US officers and troops wanted to see it.

2050 I can't believe the German citizens near Buchenwald knew nothing. There were only about one hundred survivors. Everyone else had been cremated.

2400 Seeing the camp brought home what we, as American soldiers, had been up against all alone. When I got home the first thing people asked me was, "Did you see it?" It was so unbelievable.

2700 Buchenwald has affected my life, made me want to participate wherever I can. If you see something you don't like, do something about it, don't sit back and let it happen-- Hitler had power because he was allowed to proceed unstopped.